

# **PRESS RELEASE**

## **Congressman John Conyers, Jr.**

**Fourteenth District, Michigan  
Ranking Member, Committee on the Judiciary  
Dean, Congressional Black Caucus**

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### **CONYERS/DODD/DASCHLE BILL MIRRORS RECOMMENDATIONS OF DEMOCRATIC ELECTION REFORM TASK FORCE**

Congressman John Conyers, Jr., Ranking Member of the House Judiciary Committee, has introduced an election reform bill, the "Equal Protection of Voting Rights Act," which closely mirrors the recommendations of the Democratic Election Reform Task Force. The bill has 161 cosponsors in the House and 51 cosponsors in the Senate. The lead Senate sponsors are Senator Dodd and Majority Leader Daschle. The following is a summary of the bill:

The "Equal Protection of Voting Rights Act of 2001" has been drafted in response to the overwhelming number of problems and complaints experienced by voters in the 2000 Presidential Election. This bill has the support of the NAACP, AFL-CIO, the National Council of La Raza, NOW and other advocacy groups.

First, consistent with what the U.S. Supreme Court held in Bush v. Gore, the bill would require states to adopt uniform and non-discriminatory state-wide standards for election machinery by 2004. This requirement will not only belatedly end the outdated use of punch-card balloting, but will ensure that states use a consistently optimal level of technology that will protect voters from being disenfranchised by faulty machinery. Specifically, all machines must allow the voter to verify their votes before tabulation, machines must notify voters of overvotes and undervotes, must provide an auditable record, and all machines must be accessible to voters with disabilities, language minorities and other voters with special needs.

Second, states would be required in federal elections by 2004 to allow "provisional voting" to prevent the preclusion of voters who can later show they were properly registered and improperly denied the opportunity to vote. This would help address the problem of wrongful purges.

Third, states would be required in federal elections by 2004 to send all voters a sample ballot together with instructions 10 days prior to election day along with a notification of their voting rights under federal and state law and of the appropriate federal and state agencies to contact if they believe those rights have been violated.